

REMARKS

The above-referenced application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 9, 2005. By the present Amendment, claims 55-62 have been canceled and new claims 63-68 have been added. Claims 1-54 were previously canceled by preliminary amendment. It is respectfully submitted that the aforementioned claims are fully supported by the specification, introduce no new subject matter, and are patentable over the prior art. Prompt and favorable consideration of the claims as amended is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 55-57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,695,502 to Pier et al. By the present amendment, the Applicants have canceled claims 55-57 and it is respectfully requested that the rejection of the Office Action be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claim 59 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,612,933 to Brinkerhoff. By the present amendment, the Applicants have canceled claim 59 and it is respectfully requested that the rejection of the Office Action be withdrawn.

The Office Action stated that claims 60-62 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By the present amendment, the Applicants have rewritten claim 60 as new claim 63 and includes all of the limitations of canceled base claim 59. It is respectfully submitted that new claim 63 is in condition for allowance. In addition, new claims 64-68 depend directly or indirectly from new claim 63. It is respectfully submitted these claims are also in condition for allowance.

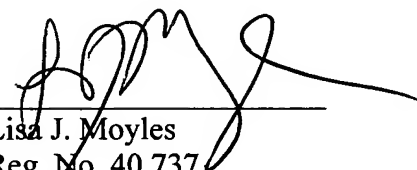
Appl. No. 10/751,579
Amdt. dated May 2, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed March 9, 2005

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims pending in the application, namely claims 63-68, are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner desire a telephonic interview to resolve any outstanding matters, he is sincerely invited to contact the undersigned at (203) 845-1941

It is believed that no fee is due for entry of the present amendment, however, if it is determined that a fee is required for entry of the present amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fee to Deposit Account No. 21-0550 in the name of United States Surgical Corporation.

Respectfully submitted,

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